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(Lepidoptera: Geometridae, Ennominae)

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***Isturgia disputaria* (Guenée, 1858), a species new to the Lepidoptera fauna of the Maltese Islands (Lepidoptera: Geometridae, Ennominae)**

A. Catania

Abstract

Isturgia disputaria (Guenée, 1858) is reported for the first time for Malta and for the whole of Europe. The genus *Isturgia* Hübner, [1823] is represented in Malta by two other species, *Isturgia pulinda* (Walker, 1860) and *Isturgia spodiaria* (Lefèbvre, 1831). Distribution notes and possible larval host plant are included.

KEY WORDS: Lepidoptera, Geometridae, Ennominae, *Isturgia disputaria*, Malta.

***Isturgia disputaria* (Guenée, 1858), una especie nueva para la fauna de Lepidoptera de Malta
(Lepidoptera: Geometridae, Ennominae)**

Resumen

Isturgia disputaria (Guenée, 1858) se cita por primera vez para Malta y para Europa. El género *Isturgia* Hübner, [1823] está representado en Malta por otras dos especies, *Isturgia pulinda* (Walker, 1860) e *Isturgia spodiaria* (Lefèbvre, 1831). Se incluyen notas sobre su distribución y posibles plantas nutricias.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lepidoptera, Geometridae, Ennominae, *Isturgia disputaria*, Malta.

Introduction

In Europe more than 900 species of Geometridae have been recorded so far (HAUSMANN, 2001). Of these, 65 species are known from the Maltese Islands (SAMMUT, 2000). The subfamily Ennominae in Malta comprises three species, *Chiasmia aestimaria* (Hübner, [1809]) a common species, *Isturgia pulinda* (Walker, 1860), a rather localized species which has been found breeding on *Acacia karroo* at Rdum tal-Madonna at Marfa Ridge (CATANIA *et al.*, 2008), and *Isturgia spodiaria* (Lefèbvre, 1831) recorded once from Rabat on the 8th November 2000 by P. Sammut (SAMMUT *et al.*, 2008) *Abraxas grossulariata* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Plagodes pulveraria* (Linnaeus, 1758) have been recorded in error by Borg (SAMMUT, 2000).

Material

MALTA, 1 ♂, Zebbug, 27-III-2010, at light, A. Catania leg.

Discussion

The single male specimen of *Isturgia disputaria* (Guenée, 1858) was attracted to a UV light trap,

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collected and is deposited in the author's collections. The identity of this species has been confirmed by Dr. Hausmann.

LERAUT (2009) lists *Isturgia disputaria* as occurring in Malta. This reference (P. Leraut pers. comm.) is taken from the Fauna Europaea version 2.1 (December 2009) (HAUSMANN *et al.*, 2009). However the citation for Malta regarding *Isturgia disputaria* is wrong and should be attributed to *Isturgia pulinda* (P. Sammut pers. comm.). According to the Fauna Europaea project *Isturgia disputaria* (Guenée, 1858) is native to the Afro-tropical region, Asian Turkey, Caucasian Russian republics, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Sinai Peninsula (Egypt), Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq.



The record of this species is very interesting. Although strong winds blowing from the South are usually a nuisance because they bring a lot of minute sand particles from the North African coast, for the lepidopterist it enhances the possibility that occasional migrant species reach our shores. In fact *Isturgia disputaria* (Guenée, 1858) which is a relatively small moth, was inside the moth trap amongst other migratory species which generally are associated with the months of March and April. These included *Hyles livornica* (Esper, 1779), *Mythimna vitellina* (Hübner, [1808]) and *Autographa gamma* (Linnaeus, 1758) all strongly attracted to UV light. Whether other specimens reached our shores, or whether the moth establishes itself in Malta cannot be ascertained. Even though *Acacia caryophylla* and *Acacia karroo* are quite common, one cannot assume that the species would adapt to local *Acacia* plants. It is known that *Isturgia disputaria* (Guenée, 1858) is highly host-specific on *Acacia*.

ISTURGIA DISPUTARIA (GUENÉE, 1858), A SPECIES NEW TO THE LEPIDOPTERA FAUNA OF THE MALTESE ISLANDS

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